



GCSE HISTORY 8145/1A/C

Paper 1 Section A/C: Russia, 1894–1945: Tsardom and communism

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

0	1
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How does **Interpretation B** differ from **Interpretation A** about the Provisional Government?

Explain your answer based on what it says in **Interpretations A** and **B**.

[4 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target	Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a) Analyse how interpretations of a key feature of a period differ (AO4b)	
Level 2:	Developed analysis of interpretations to explain differences based on their content	3–4
	Students may progress from a simple analysis of interpretations with extended reasoning to explain the differences.	
	For example, Interpretation A says that the Provisional Government had lost the support of the people and the army as early as July 1917, which was several months before the Bolshevik takeover. Whereas Interpretation B credits Lenin and Trotsky as being personally responsible for the destruction of the Provisional Government.	
Level 1:	Simple analysis of interpretation(s) to identify differences based on their content	1–2
	Students are likely to identify relevant features in each interpretation(s).	
	For example, Interpretation B says that the Provisional Government ended because people supported the Bolsheviks whereas Interpretation A says the Provisional Government ended because of failures in the First World War.	
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0

0 2

Why might the authors of **Interpretations A** and **B** have a different interpretation about the Provisional Government?

Explain your answer using **Interpretations A** and **B** and your contextual knowledge.

[4 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a)**
Analyse why interpretations differ (AO4c)

Level 2: **Developed answer analyses provenance of interpretation to explain reasons for differences** **3–4**

Students may progress from identification to explanation of the reasons for the differences in the interpretations supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to, for example, differences in provenance, context of their time of writing, place, previous experience, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, and access to information, purpose and audience.

For example, the author of Interpretation A was writing many years later when the events of the Russian Revolution were well known. He could talk about the bigger picture and refer to a range of reasons for the end of the Provisional Government. Whereas the author of Interpretation B is blaming the Bolsheviks specifically because he wanted a parliamentary system to develop in Russia and would not have been happy about the Communist dictatorship that Lenin established.

Level 1: **Simple answer analyses provenance to identify reasons for difference(s)** **1–2**

Students are likely to identify relevant reasons for the differences in each interpretation(s). Related to, for example, differences in provenance, context of their time of writing, place, previous experience, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, access to information, purpose and audience.

For example, Interpretation A was written by someone who was friendly with Lenin and Trotsky so he will emphasise the Provisional Government's weakness and unpopularity as the reasons why it ended. Whereas the author of Interpretation B supported the Provisional Government so he is blaming the Bolsheviks for what happened in 1917.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0	3
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Which interpretation gives the more convincing opinion about the Provisional Government?

Explain your answer based on your contextual knowledge and what it says in **Interpretations A** and **B**.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target	Analyse individual interpretations (AO4a) Evaluate interpretations and make substantiated judgements in the context of historical events studied (AO4d)	
Level 4:	Complex evaluation of interpretations with sustained judgement based on contextual knowledge/understanding	7–8
	Extends Level 3. Students may progress from a developed evaluation of interpretations by analysis of the relationship between the interpretations supported by factual knowledge and understanding. For example, Interpretation B is more convincing because Lenin and Trotsky were ruthless and well organised. Lenin was so determined to overthrow the Provisional Government that he accepted help from Germany, Russia's enemy in the First World War, to return from exile. Trotsky was responsible for planning the takeover of Petrograd by the Red Guards and the storming of the Winter Palace in November 1917.	
Level 3:	Developed evaluation of both interpretations based on contextual knowledge/understanding	5–6
	Extends Level 2. Answers may assert one interpretation is more/less convincing. Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the interpretations by extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding. For example, Interpretation A is convincing about the government being weakened by failure in the First World War. There were thousands of deserters from the army after a Russian offensive in June 1917 was defeated by the German army. However, Interpretation B is also convincing about growing support for the Bolsheviks because after their role in defeating the Kornilov Revolt in September 1917, the Bolsheviks became the majority party in the Moscow and Petrograd Soviets.	

Level 2: Simple evaluation of one interpretation based on contextual knowledge/understanding **3–4**

There may be undeveloped comment about the other interpretation.

Students may progress from a basic analysis of interpretations to simple evaluation, supported with factual knowledge and understanding.

For example, Interpretation B is convincing because the Bolsheviks were well organised. Lenin had made a plan of action in his 'April theses'. The Bolsheviks organised themselves into an army which they called the 'Red Guards'.

Level 1: Basic analysis of interpretation(s) based on contextual knowledge/understanding **1–2**

Answers show understanding/support for one/both interpretation(s), but the case is made by assertion/recognition of agreement.

For example, Interpretation A is convincing because peasants were hostile towards the Provisional Government. They ignored its orders and took over land in the countryside themselves.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0	4	Describe two problems faced by Lenin after the October/November Revolution of 1917.	[4 marks]
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The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Demonstrate knowledge of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied (AO1a)**
Demonstrate understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied. (AO1b)

Level 2: **Answers demonstrate knowledge and understanding** **3–4**

Students may progress from a simple demonstration of knowledge about the issues identified with extended reasoning supported by understanding of, for example, the ways in which events were problematic.

For example, one problem was that Lenin had to get Russia out of the war and deliver the peace he had promised to the Russian people. The Germans began to advance again in 1918 and so Lenin had to accept a very harsh peace treaty.

Another problem was that the Bolsheviks only had support from certain groups in society and so they did not win a majority in the elections to the new Constituent Assembly. The Socialist Revolutionaries were the biggest party when the Assembly opened in 1918.

Level 1: **Answers demonstrate knowledge** **1–2**

Students demonstrate relevant knowledge about the issue(s) identified which might be related.

For example, Lenin had to win the Civil War against the Whites.

Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question **0**

0 5

In what ways were the lives of Soviet people affected by Stalin's modernisation of the USSR?

Explain your answer.

[8 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:4)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:4)

Level 4: **Complex explanation of changes** **7–8**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 3.

Students may progress from a developed explanation of changes by explanation of the complexities of change arising from differences such as time, group, social and/or economic impact, supported by knowledge and understanding.

For example, the effects were a complex mix of positive and negative for different groups in society; although workers in the cities had access to better health care and education they also suffered from overcrowded housing and poor availability of consumer goods.

Level 3: **Developed explanation of changes** **5–6**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question

Extends Level 2.

Students may progress from a simple explanation by developed reasoning considering **two or more** of the identified consequences, supporting them by factual knowledge and understanding.

In addition to a Level 2 response, students make additional developed point(s).

For example, the development of industry led to better energy supplies using hydro-electric power and improved transport and communication with new railways and canals. People benefited from the new underground system in Moscow.

For example, collectivisation completely destroyed the livelihoods of 'Kulaks' who were arrested if they refused to hand over their land and produce. They

were sentenced to hard labour working on modernising engineering projects such as dams and canals.

Level 2:	Simple explanation of change Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	3–4
	Students may progress from a basic explanation of change by using simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding which might be related, for example, to one of the identified changes. For example, whole cities were created. Industrial workers faced very harsh discipline; punishments were severe involving hard, dangerous labour on building projects	
Level 1:	Basic explanation of change(s) Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question	1–2
	Students identify change(s), which are relevant to the question. Explanation at this level is likely to be implicit or by assertion. For example, peasants were forced to hand over their produce and land as part of collectivisation; workers in industry were given strict production targets to meet.	
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0

0 6

Which of the following was the main reason why Tsarist Russia was difficult to rule before 1914:

- economic problems
- political problems?

Explain your answer with reference to **both** bullet points.

[12 marks]

The indicative content is designed to exemplify the qualities expected at each level and is not a full exemplar answer. All historically relevant and valid answers should be credited.

Target **Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order concepts (AO2:6)**
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied (AO1:6)

Examiners are reminded that AO1 and AO2 are regarded as interdependent and when deciding on a level should be considered together. When establishing a mark within a level, examiners should reward three marks for strong performance in both assessment objectives; two marks may be achieved by strong performance in either AO1 or AO2 and one mark should be rewarded for weak performance within the level in both assessment objectives.

Level 4: **Complex explanation of both bullets leading to a sustained judgement** **10–12**
Answer demonstrates a range of accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question.

Extends Level 3

Students may progress from a developed explanation of change by complex explanation of the relationship between causes supported by factual knowledge and understanding and arriving at a sustained judgement.

For example, both sets of problems worked in combination to make Tsarist Russia difficult to rule. In combination they accounted for the dissatisfaction of every layer of Russian society. The middle-class section of society wanted to take political control of the country and found support amongst other social classes in both towns and countryside who were desperate for a solution to their economic problems.

Level 3:	Developed explanation of both bullets Answer demonstrates a range of accurate knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Extends Level 2. Students may progress from a simple explanation of change with extended reasoning supported by developed factual knowledge and understanding. For example, economic problems developed throughout Tsar Nicholas' reign as inefficient farming and poor-quality land kept peasants trapped in appalling conditions. It was the same for industrial workers in Moscow and St Petersburg who endured bad living and working conditions. The reforms of Stolypin were of little benefit to either agriculture or industry, so the economy was weak with low wages and high unemployment. For example, political problems existed because organised groups such as the Socialist Revolutionaries believed revolution was the solution to Russia's problems. In 1905, the Tsar was faced with a massive protest in St Petersburg. The political concessions granted in the 1905 October Manifesto did not fully satisfy the demands for reform.	7–9
Level 2:	Simple explanation of bullet(s) Answer demonstrates specific knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question Students may progress from a basic explanation of change by using simple reasoning and supporting it with factual knowledge and understanding. For example, it was hard for the Tsar to rule Russia before the first World War because when he created a parliament the deputies were openly critical of him. The Duma wanted more democracy in Russia but the Tsar believed in autocracy.	4–6
Level 1:	Basic explanation of bullet(s) Answer demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is relevant to the question. Students recognise and provide a basic explanation of one/both bullet points. For example, most of the Russian people were poor peasants who were unhappy with the Tsar and supported revolutionary groups.	1–3
	Students either submit no evidence or fail to address the question	0